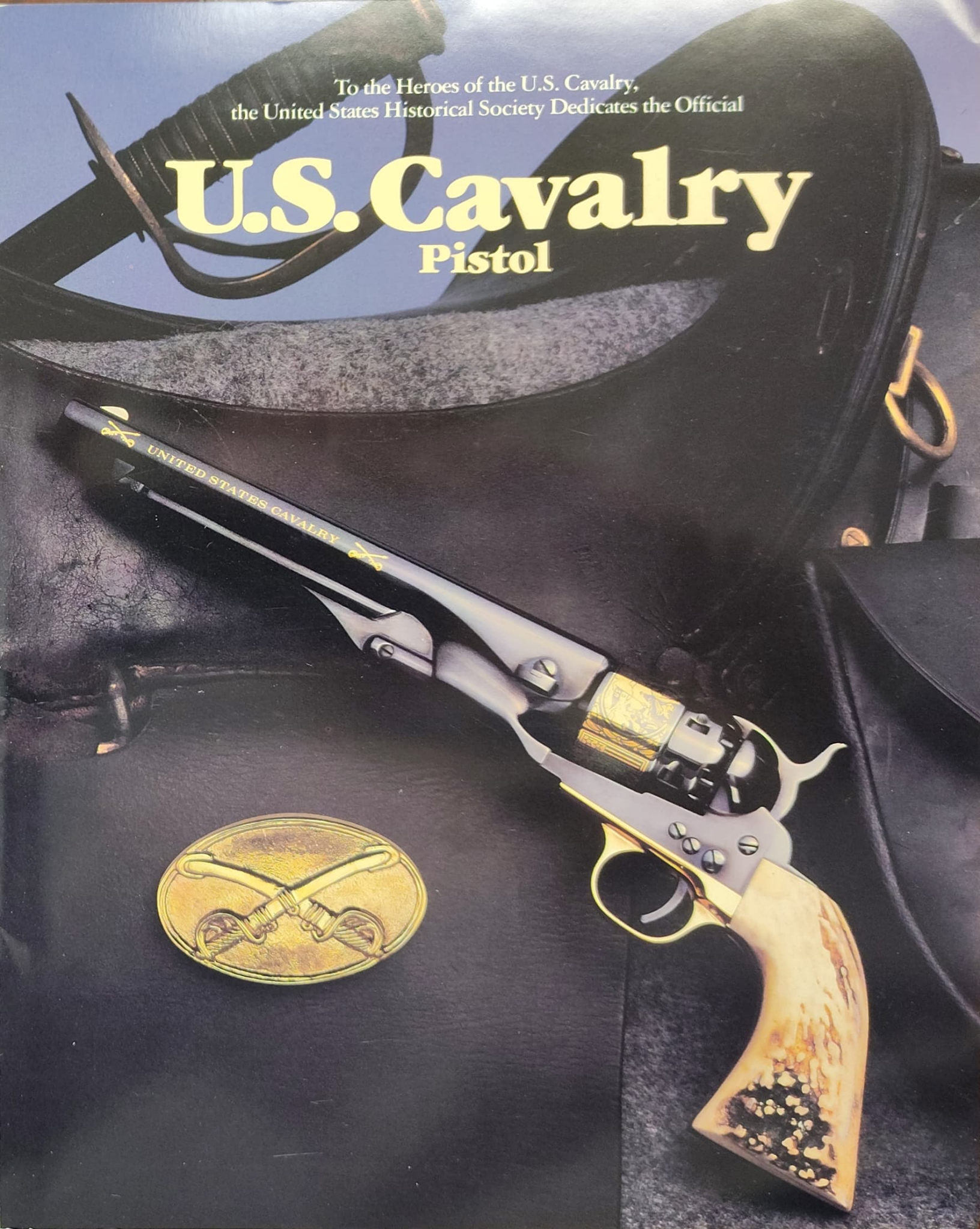
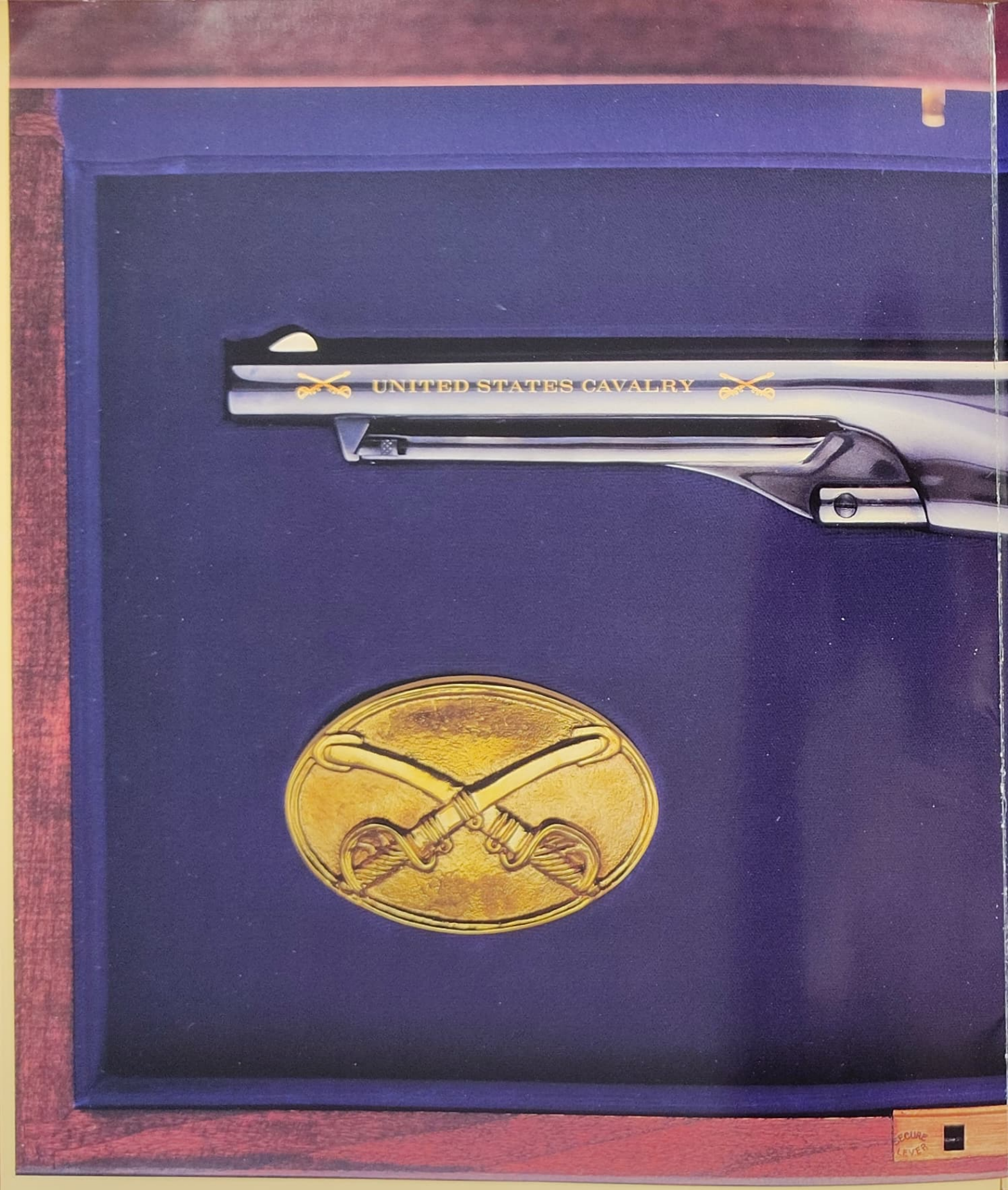
To the Heroes of the U.S. Cavalry,
the United States Historical Society Dedicates the Official

U.S. Cavalry Pistol





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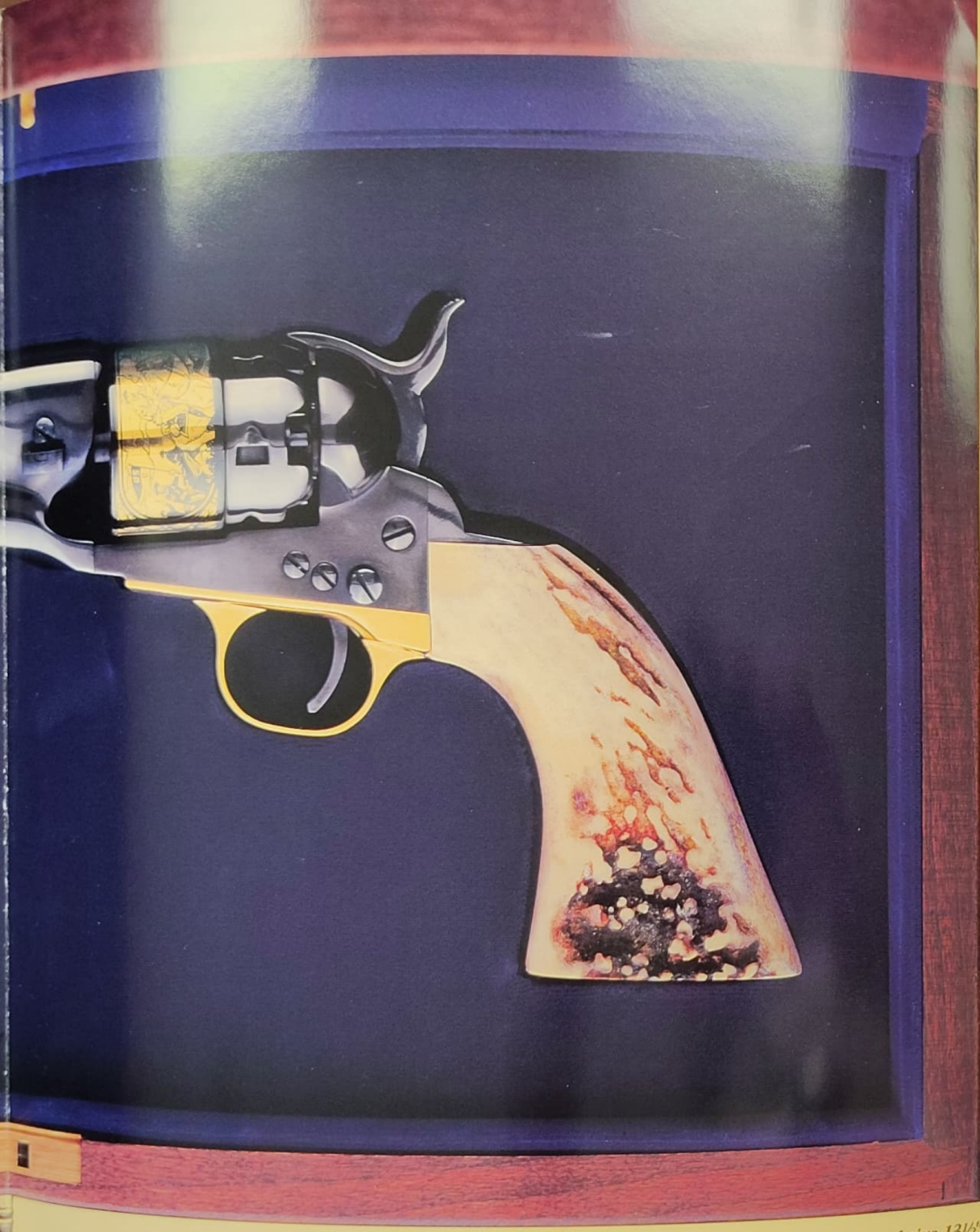


Gun shown actual size 13½"

CAVALRY PISTOL

The Men Who Bore the Gun

General George A. Custer is one of the most famous cavalrymen to carry the 1860 Army. Graduating at the foot of his class at West Point, Custer rose to the rank of Major General in the Civil War before his 25th birthday, largely because of his fearlessness. After the war, he became commander of the 7th Cavalry. He made the regiment a crack outfit through constant drilling, field work, hand-picked troops, and his own charisma.

A mounted band accompanied Custer's regiment in the field, often playing "Garry Owen," the regimental song, or "The Girl I Left Behind Me," a favorite air. He often led his regiment on long and grueling marches over the prairies, reviving his worn-out troopers with a combination of his own exuberant personality and the mounted martial band playing bracing military marches.

Congressional Medal of Honor

General George Custer is the most famous of all Cavalrymen and is best remembered for his last stand at the Little Big Horn. Yet even he did not receive the prestigious Medal of Honor.

The Medal of Honor was presented to 416 Cavalry soldiers during the decades of Indian fighting after the Civil War. Every man so honored was below the rank of major. These men, the privates, sergeants, and lieutenants who exhibited extraordinary bravery and courage, stand as a symbol of the frontier—the tireless soldier advancing against insurmountable odds with his trusty Colt revolver and faithful steed as his ever-present companions. It is the courageous spirit and heroic behavior of the American Cavalryman that the United States Historical Society commemorates with the *U.S. Cavalry Pistol.*

The Decoration

The United States Historical Society commissioned the leading American historical artist Jack Woodson to create the art to be plated in 24-karat gold on the official *U.S. Cavalry Pistol.* The cylinder is decorated with an American flag of the era crossed with the Cavalry guidon. A Cavalry trooper in full charge aims his trusty 1860 Army Revolver and fires from horseback. The barrel bears the legend "United States Cavalry," edged on both sides by crossed sabers.

Specifications

- Actual size: 13½ inches long
- Genuine hand-fitted stag grips
- Includes handsome walnut case with royal blue velvet lining, engraved brass plaque, and 24-karat gold-plated solid brass U.S. Cavalry Commemorative Belt Buckle, created by the Society especially for the *U.S. Cavalry Pistol*
- Edition Limit: 975, with Certificate of Authenticity from the United States Historical Society

The Society's *Cavalry Pistol* has genuine stag grips, most prized by collectors. These rare grips are extremely difficult to obtain today, and no two are alike. Each is hand carved and carefully fitted to the frame.

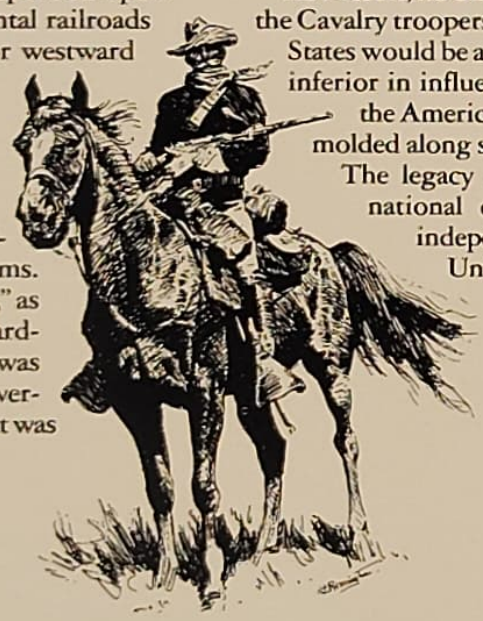
In the saddle and on the battlefield, the 1860 Army Cavalry Revolver was without parallel. Now it lives again in the 1860 Army Cavalry Revolver authorized by the United States Historical Society and the Virginia Firearms Manufactory.

The U.S. Cavalry Pistol

A Rich Legacy

By 1890, the American frontier had been settled. The great buffalo herds were gone, and with them the plains Indians that depended upon them for life itself. The transcontinental railroads were completed, opening the way for westward expansion. The marauding Indians were corralled on reservations, and the open range was a memory. Yet the spirit of the frontier lives on, symbolized by the American Indian, the frontiersman, the cowboy, and the Cavalry trooper bearing his favorite sidearms.

The Cavalry soldier, the "yellowleg," as he was often called, was a tough, hard-riding, hard-shooting dragoon. He was usually underpaid, underfed, and overworked. He didn't win big battles—that was done by the infantry. But the pony soldiers set up the battle so someone else could win the war.



As a result, no one much remembers the names of the Cavalry troopers. But, without them, the United States would be a much smaller country, probably inferior in influence and power to Mexico. And the American character might not have been molded along such strong, determined lines.

The legacy of the frontier was to build a national character that was self-reliant, independent, and resourceful. The United States Historical Society salutes that legacy with the *U.S. Cavalry Pistol*, an 1860 Army Colt Revolver.

The U.S. Cavalry and the American West

From the early 1860s to the mid-1870s, one gun was king. For soldiers, statesmen, collectors, and arms fanciers, *the* gun to own was an 1860 Army Colt Revolver. In the Indian wars out West, the 1860 Army was far and away the sidearm of preference. Here, men prized the 1860 Army for its utility—it was more powerful and more accurate than its predecessor, the '51 Navy—as well as its good looks.

The pistol was extremely popular with the U.S. Cavalry. Each Cavalryman—from General Custer on down the ranks—received an 1860 Army and a Springfield carbine rifle as standard issue.

The U.S. Cavalry Belt Buckle

The Accessories

The case for each *U.S. Cavalry Pistol* is of hand-selected walnut, lined in royal blue velvet. In a special compartment is a solid brass U.S. Cavalry belt buckle, plated with 24-karat gold. The famed crossed sabers appear in bas-relief on the barrel. The key is stored underneath the buckle.

The Cavalry revolver is available in a limited edition of only 975 pistols. A numbered Registry Certificate is included that attests to the pistol's quality and authenticity within the edition.

An Official Issue of the United States Historical Society

The *U.S. Cavalry Pistol* is an official issue authorized by the Society. Each 1860 Army Colt Cavalry revolver is test fired and then inspected by the Virginia Firearms Manufactory.

The Revolver is available only by direct reservation through the United States Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia, a private, non-governmental organization dedicated to historical research and the sponsorship of projects and issuance of objects which are artistically and historically significant.

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